



# Tapuitema

...ina ia manino le folauā.

Official American Samoa Government Weekly Newsletter



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## ASG's proposed budget for FY09 hits \$340.85M

The Fono has received the American Samoa Government's proposed budget of \$340.85 million for fiscal year 2009. The amount is a 12% increase over the FY08 budget.

The budget was submitted to the Fono, accompanied by a cover letter from Acting Governor Faoa Ipulasi Aitofele Sunia who explained that revenue projections supporting the proposed budget is consistent with actual revenue collection trends of the most recent fiscal year.

Faoa wrote, "These revenue trends indicate strong gains in corporate taxes while other revenue categories maintained current levels, especially in the absence of new revenue measures." He added, "These scarce resources were carefully allocated to ensure the provision of improved service levels in the new fiscal year."

According to Faoa, any anticipated improvements in service delivery efforts will be realized from increased performance efficiency and effectiveness rather than from new monies. "This fact makes it imperative to control spending within approved budget limits," he said.

With regards to the actual budget, local revenues are projected at \$68.4 million which is a 6% increase over FY08. Grant in aid from the Department of Interior stands at \$22.7 million while the Capital Improvement Projects, at \$9.38 million, shows a decrease of about \$1.5 million from the current fiscal year.

Federal grants are estimated at \$102 million which is a \$3.1 million increase over FY08, and enterprise funds are projected at \$147.3 million.

Federal grants, enterprise funds, special programs, and the Department of Education account for the biggest increases as compared to FY08.

Federal grants are estimated to increase by 3% while enterprise funds are projected to increase by 20% due largely to the soaring cost of fuel for utilities. In addition, special programs are two times higher than the current fiscal year. Special programs in the budget that were not included in the FY08 budget include the American Samoa Visitors Bureau (\$200,000), the EMS general fund subsidy (\$697,500), the ASG fleet fuel (\$360,000), American Samoa Waste Con-

servation Program (\$59,000), and ASG electricity costs (\$1 million).

The additional funding for DOE is to fund the salary increases for teachers under the reclassification law.

include the American Samoa Visitors Bureau (\$200,000), the EMS general fund subsidy (\$697,500), the ASG fleet fuel (\$360,000), the American Samoa Waste Conservation Program (\$59,000), and ASG electricity costs (\$1 million).

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Faoa noted that ASG will continue to pursue improvements to its financial management capabilities, which will include better management of the federal grant programs. He said that increases in federal funds for FY09 will provide for increased training in grant writing, in addition to improving overall grant compliance.

The Fono will hold hearings where directors will be called to testify, prior to the final budget being approved.

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### GRANT WRITING SEMINAR

December 15-18, 2008

Sponsored by: NIH: Summit on Science on Eliminating Health Disparities

For more info visit website: <http://www.blsmeetings.net/2008healthdisparitiessummit/>

## Coastweek offers a plethora of activities to help raise awareness on coastal resources

September 15-26 is Coastweek in the territory and in celebration of the event, the Department of Commerce is offering a variety of activities for local students of all ages in an effort to help raise awareness about our local marine and coastal resources.

A media campaign kicked off on September 8 featuring Coastweek activities, environmental messages, and the recycle campaign - all of which are being funneled to the public through newspaper advertisements, press releases, and informational talk shows on radio and local television stations.

Activities include tours to different locations, educational outreach programs, snorkeling and kayaking, as well as an artwork competition and poetry contest.

All interested schools and organizations interested in Coastweek presentations are welcomed to inquire about the **educational outreach program** from September 15-19. These presentations are to promote awareness of values, functions, and threats of and to our coastal resources.

The **artwork competition** is open to all interested students from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. All public and private schools are invited to participate in the annual competition. Winning art pieces will be featured in the 2009 Art and Tide Calendar.

Entries must revolve around the theme: "Coastweeks: Healthy Coast; Healthy Communities," and the deadline is September 26. (Entries must be submitted to the Department of Commerce on the second floor of the Executive Office Building in Utulei before 4 p.m. that day).

Besides the art competition, young writers will also have the chance to show off their stuff. The DOC/ASCMP is hosting an **environmental poetry contest** which is open to students from levels K-12. Poetry pieces must focus on the theme: "Coastweek: Healthy Coast; Healthy Communities," and deadline for submissions is Thursday, September 25.

In addition to the competitions, there will also be an **informative talk show** on Thursday, September 18 featuring the Project Notification Review System (PNRS). This is the ideal program for those wondering how to obtain a land use permit, and why it is necessary.

The PNRS talk show will be aired on Malama TV and will feature different agencies that deal directly with the process involved.

Youngsters in levels 4-8 are invited to attend the **ASCC/Land Grant Tour** on Wednesday, September 24. According to DOC, the forest plays a very critical role in preserving our coastal environment and that is why they continue to offer the tour as a component of Coastweek celebrations.

Students in levels 5-8 have a great opportunity to visit one of the largest freshwater marshes and learn about its significance by taking part in the **Wetland Tour** set to take place on Tuesday, September 23 in Malaeloa.

For the high school students, there will be a tour of the **Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary** on Monday, September 22. The tour is to help foster an understanding of values towards keeping our coasts pollution-free by discussing the importance of protecting natural marine resources.

In addition, high school students are also invited to join the local park rangers on a tour of the **National Park of American Samoa** on Thursday, September 25. Seating for this tour is limited so early registration is encouraged.

And finally, high school students and join in on the fun and enjoy learning through **snorkeling and kayaking** at Su'iga Ula ole Atuvasa (Utulei) Beach on Friday, September 26. This is a wonderful opportunity to snorkel and observe the beautiful underwater marine life and its surroundings. Space is limited and participants are reminded to bring extra clothes.

If any of the aforementioned activities sound like fun, don't hesitate to call Soli Tuaumu at 633-5155 or email him at [stuaumu@doc.asg.as](mailto:stuaumu@doc.asg.as) for more information or to register for any of the activities.

## **DOH continues to crusade for prevention as dengue fever cases increase to 51**

The Department of Health is upping their efforts in promoting prevention measures as cases of dengue fever continue to climb.

A total of 51 dengue fever cases have been recorded locally this year so far. Of that number, more than 40 were discovered in the last three weeks alone. And while the number may not seem very high, there is reason to be concerned, as the total number of cases last year totaled 109.

The best way to prevent the spread of the disease, according to DOH medical director Dr. Ivan Tuliau, is to rid homes and surroundings of items that could hold water, as the mosquito that carries the dengue virus breeds in water.

Such items include old tires, buckets, ice cream containers, etc. It is extremely important that everyone pull

together to rid their homes and surroundings of these items, especially during this time of rainy conditions and wet weather.

Tuliau said they are concerned with the increasing number of dengue fever victims, and they are hoping that the number of cases would stay low.

The recent outbreak came about after the territory hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> Festival of Pacific Arts, leading some to speculate that the virus could have been brought to the territory by some of the visiting Festival delegates.

Before the Festival, DOH did issue a warning regarding outbreaks of dengue fever within the Pacific region. According to DOH, it is possible that some Festival participants arrived here without knowing they were carrying the dengue virus.

The World Health Organization has expressed its concern with the climbing

number of dengue fever cases in the region, as many countries including Kiribati, New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga, and Palau have reported increasing number of cases.

Even nearby Samoa has reported an outbreak of the potentially fatal disease.

“DOH continues to urge our community to continue to take preventive measures against dengue. Prevention is the key word that our community should focus attention on,” Tuliau said.

DOH continues to recommend the 3Ds of dengue fever prevention which includes: Draining standing water around the homes and areas within the villages; Dressing in long sleeve shirts, pants, socks, and shoes; and using mosquito repellent that contains “DEET” on exposed skin.

## **LBJ has about \$200K left over for the off-island medical referral program**

When called to testify before the Senate regarding the Administration’s proposal to allocate \$1.3 million to cover the shortfall for the medical referral program for FY07, LBJ Hospital CEO Patricia Tindall reported that the LBJ has about \$200,000 left over from the \$2.5 million budget for the referral program to cover the rest of the current fiscal year.

However, Tindall clarified that the figure was merely an estimate, and the amount could change as there could be other invoices from off-island hospitals that the LBJ has not yet received.

According to Tindall, the off-island medical referral program used up its \$2-million-dollar budget for FY07 last April and therefore, because of the lack of adequate funding, the hospital had planned to stop the program. However, the LBJ continued with the program per the Governor’s request, expecting that a supplemental appropriation would be sought from the Fono.

### ***SHARE IMPORTANT INFORMATION & ACTIVITIES IN YOUR ASG NEWSLETTER***

with your ASG workforce as well as the citizens of American Samoa.

**Email your articles, announcements, pictures or other information to:**

Harry Stevens ([harry.stevens@americansamoa.gov](mailto:harry.stevens@americansamoa.gov)) or Tialuga Vince Iuli ([vince.iuli@americansamoa.gov](mailto:vince.iuli@americansamoa.gov))



## Administration proposes adding non-career employees to ASG Retirement Fund

The Fono has received a proposal from the Administration that seeks to add non-career service employees like appointed officers, judges, and gubernatorial appointees to the American Samoa Government Employees' Retirement Fund (ASGERF).

If enacted into law, the proposal would amend certain provisions of the current ASGERF law.

The preamble of the proposed legislation states that the local Legislature has recommended to the ASGERF board to institute certain changes in its operations. And in order to accommodate these recommendations, it is necessary to make changes to statutory provisions affected.

One of the amendments identifies employment positions that are eligible for membership under the ASGERF. The positions include appointed officers, including but not limited to judges, district, county, village officials and their assistants; the head of an executive department, bureau or office; gubernatorial appointees; and heads of government authorities and agencies.

Individuals holding posts in the aforementioned positions are, under current law, not eligible members of the ASGERF.

According to the measure, a person employed on contract or on a definite fixed term is not eligible to be a member of the Fund, but an appointed officer who wishes to decline membership may do so by notifying the Fund in writing.

The measure provides for purchasing prior ineligible service for non-retirees, a revision of annuity for predeceased annuitants, and the deletion of the incentive that no longer applies to retirees, in addition to an annual review of the cost of living allowance adjustments by the Board, instead of the current law which requires the Board to make reviews and recommendations every two years and reporting them to the Governor.

Over the weekend, Governor Togiola made known on his radio program his intention to submit to the Fono an increase in the cost of living adjustment for ASG retirees. According to him, this review and increase is required by law.

Togiola said he was not satisfied with the first report and recommendations submitted to him by the Board and therefore, he has returned the report to the Board for further review. Once he agrees with the Board's recommendations, Togiola said he intends to submit the measure to the Fono as soon as possible.

## HISTORICAL NOTES

*By: Stan Sorensen, Historian, Office of the Governor*

**On September 6, 1913**, American Samoa's Governor, Commander Clark Daniel Stearns, established the following government departments: (1) Judicial; (2) Treasury; (3) Interior; (4) Agriculture and (5) Public Health.

**On September 7, 1911**, USS *Princeton* relieved USS *Annapolis* as station ship for the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila and remained until May 5, 1915.

**On September 9, 1927**, Captain Steven Victor Graham relieved Captain Henry Francis Bryan, and became American Samoa's 17th naval governor (until August 2, 1929).

**On September 10, 1945**, Captain Harold Alexander Houser relieved Captain Samuel Wakefield Canan and became American Samoa's 33rd naval governor (until April 22, 1947).

**On September 11, 1930**, the light cruiser USS *Omaha*, commanded by Captain John Downes, and carrying the American Samoan Commission and Pathé News photographer Merl LaVoy, weighed anchor at San Pedro, California en route to Pago Pago via Honolulu. The Commission's members included Senator Hiram Bingham, Republican of Connecticut, Chairman of the Commission and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Affairs; Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, Democrat, Senate Minority Leader; Representative Carroll L. Beedy, Republican from Maine and Representative Guinn Williams of Texas, Democrat, both members of the House Committee on Insular Affairs. The Commission's naval adviser and paymaster was Captain William Rea Furlong, USN, who was the Chief of the Policy and Liaison Section of the Navy's Office of Island Governments. He subsequently became a Rear Admiral, and, as Commanding Officer of the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, was responsible for salvaging most of the ships that were sunk on December 7, 1941, repairing them, and sending them off to war.

**On September 11, 2002**, the American Samoa Government held a memorial service for the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States in the Samoana Gymnasium in Utulei. The Call to Worship, Invocation, Sermon and Benediction were delivered by Reverend Elder Tapu Sitagata of the Nua and Se'etaga Congregational Church. Reverend Taulafo Avei, Chairman of the Tutuila Methodist Synod delivered the prayer while Deacon David Pereira of the Pago Pago Sacred Heart Parish read from scripture. Hymns were sung by choirs from the Departments of Public Safety, Public Works and Human and Social Services, with passages from Mozart's *Requiem* sung by the American Samoa Community College Choir. The address was given by Governor Tauese Sunia, and a candlelight ceremony was conducted by First Lady Fagaofa'i Sunia.

**On September 12, 1927**, the New Zealand Government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate complaints against Sir George Richardson's administration of Western Samoa.

**On September 12, 1943**, USS *Tutuila* (ARG-4), formerly USS *Arthur P. Gorman*, and the second U.S. Navy vessel to bear the name, was launched at Baltimore, Maryland.

## Administration proposes 2% raise for 95% of ASG retirees

The Administration is proposing that 95% of the 1,500 beneficiaries of the American Samoa Government's Employees' Retirement Fund receive a cost-of-living increase of 2%.

The Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) Adjustment proposal has been submitted to the Fono for review and approval.

In addition to the raise, the beneficiaries will receive a lump sum check as the proposal is retroactive to October 1, 2006. The proposal is calling for a 2% cost of living allowance adjustment for ASG employees who retired on or before September 30, 2006.

Acting Governor Faoa Ipulasi Aitofele Sunia explained to the Fono leadership through a letter accompanying the proposal that the "current position of fiscal strength that our government holds today is due in no small part to the immense efforts of ASG's past workforce," adding that the legislation recognizes what he calls "those invaluable contributions to our financial security."

According to Faoa, the measure would remove an old amendment to the COLA review for recent retirees. He explained that for several years, adjustments were calculated according to the date of retirement. However, amendments proposed in the measure would allow 100% of retirees to be considered for COLA adjustments in the future.

In a statement to members of the Senate during a hearing on a separate retirement bill, Chairman

of the ASG Retirement Board Aleki Sene Sr. said it is appropriate to increase the COLA for retirees, adding that the Board supports the Administration's proposal.

He explained that if the proposal is approved, it will go into effect on October 1, 2008 and be retroactive to October 1, 2006. Sene said the Board is required by law to review the COLA every two years and the information is then given to an actuary for review before recommendations are submitted to the Governor.

The Board does not have a fixed increase amount for the COLA as, according to Sene, there are concerns because nobody can predict the future as the economy and world market indicators tend to fluctuate.

He added that the Fund is doing well, and the Board has continuously increased the COLA since the establishment of the Fund.

Retirement Office Executive Director Filisouaiga Ta'afua explained that the monthly benefits pay-outs are about \$1.1 million for 1,500 retirees, with the highest retirement payment being about \$4,000.

He explained that contributions on a monthly basis add up to \$776,000 and income earned by the Fund on its off-island investment is used to offset the shortfall in those monthly payments. If, however, the money collected from the investments decrease, Ta'afua said the last resort would be to increase contributions from members.

## American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA)

ASEPA continues to ensure the residents of our territory that the water from different water vending machines located across the territory is safe for consumption.

ASEPA encourages everyone to clean out their empty bottles thoroughly before filling them up with water from these machines.

If the machine is not clean, do not use it. Dirty machines include those with algae on the spout or on the shelf.

Consumers are encouraged to look out for unsanitary conditions on or near the water machines. If any are present, move to another machine as the health of your family depends on it.

**CONTINUE TO  
KEEP  
AMERICAN  
SAMOA CLEAN!**

## **President Bush seeks to protect 3 Pacific Island chains, American Samoa included**

Governor Togiola Tulafono's request to US President George Bush to designate the Rose Atoll as a national monument could become a reality sooner than later.

According to the Associated Press, the decision could be reached as early as this week, when President Bush seeks "formal comment from his Cabinet agencies on a plan that could make three of the world's most remote and pristine island chains off limits to commercial fishing and mineral exploration."

The AP reports that "the action, which could be completed before Bush leaves office, would rank as one of the largest marine conservation efforts history."

The three chains Bush's proposal would conserve include 115,000 square miles of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Line Island in the central Pacific along the equator, and American Samoa's Rose Atoll.

Media reports state that the White House plans to send a memo to Cabinet members, including the secretaries of the Departments of Defense, Interior, and Commerce, as well as the Council on Environmental Quality who will evaluate different levels of protection for the three aforementioned areas and the impacts of establishing marine reserves there.

Two years ago, a bar was placed on fishing, the extraction of oil and gas, and tourism from the waters and coral reefs in a large chunk of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands which has been designated as a national monument and is the single largest conservation area on earth.

Whether Bush will designate the three Pacific Island chains as national monuments or decide to permit limited fishing or other activities in those areas is not certain at this time.

Earlier this year in May, Governor Togiola wrote to President Bush requesting that the Rose Atoll be designated as a national monument. In his letter, which was written after his first trip to Rose Island, Togiola explained that the Rose Atoll is a nesting place for endangered green sea turtles, and serves as a stopover for a dozen species of migratory birds.

## **Community Swimming Pool Project gets nod from PNRs**

The Land Use Permit Application (LUPA) for the Pago Pago Rotary Club to begin construction on the community swimming pool project at the Lion's Park in Tafuna has been approved by the Project Notification and Review System (PNRS).

The approval comes less than a week after the PNRs tabled the application because of concerns that chlorine might make its way to the ocean when the pool is drained into the Pala Lagoon during necessary maintenance and repair work.

However, Rotarians insist that the impact from draining the pool would not be significant as this procedure would, at most, occur every five years. In addition, the group explained to the Board that they would let the chlorine dissipate for 3-4 days prior to draining the pool into the Pala Lagoon so the drainage would just be fresh water, without the chemicals.

The long awaited community swimming pool project consists of several phases budgeted to cost an estimated \$1.5 million. With the LUPA approval, the committee will now seek grant funding to help make the project a reality.

There will actually be two separate pools, which are the first and second phases of the project. The first would be a recreational pool with a shallow area ideal for younger swimmers, while the second pool is for competitive swimming events.

The third and final phase of the project is the construction of a facility that will support the swimming pools, including showers and a ticketing area.

The pool will not only be a recreational facility for families, but it will also serve as a place to provide the public with much needed training in water safety and swimming which, in essence, could be a wonderful way to help alleviate the high number of drowning incidents in the territory.



## Governor Togiola uses Kona trip to discuss key issues with NELHA, UH, and NOAA

While in Kona, Hawaii to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting from August 24-29, Governor Togiola Tulafono was able to discuss key issues from education and alternative energy sources to the Territorial Marine Science Center with representatives and officials of different organizations and agencies.

Togiola met with the CEO of the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority (NELHA) Ronald Baird and Operations Manager Jan War to discuss alternative energy sources.

On Thursday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, the Governor visited Imiloa Astronomy Center at the University of Hawaii's Hilo campus where he met with Chancellor Rose Tseng and Dr. Michael Crosby to discuss scholarships and internships for marine biology and science students of American Samoa.

At Imiloa Astronomy Center, Togiola and his delegation (including First Lady Maryann Tulafono, Director of Commerce Faleseu Eliu Paopao, Director of Marine and Wildlife Resources Ufagafa Ray Tulafono, and Department of Commerce Deputy Director Lelei Peau) were led on a tour of the facility by Associate Director Ka'iu Kimura who explained the purpose, functions, and operations of the center in promoting and learning science from both a traditional journey of the creation of the Hawaiian Islands, to conventional research capacities.

While in Hilo, the Governor and the AS delegation were accompanied by Daniel Basta, who is the Director of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries Program. The group visited the North West Hawaiian Islands – Mokuapapa Discovery Center to explore first-hand on-the-ground facilities to promote marine and coastal conservation issues and strategies.

This was the opportunity that led to discussions of the Governor's plans to enhance the territory's efforts in increasing awareness and promoting marine biology, science, and research capacities, as well as his endeavor to fundraise for a Territorial Marine Science Center.

On route back to Kona, the Governor made sure he met with Michael Kaleikini, Plant Manager of Puna Geothermal Venture who led him on a tour of the facility before the two engaged in a discussion about the potential opportunities to explore alternative energy sources in American Samoa.

Upon departing the Aloha State, Togiola will be heading to Los Angeles, CA for the LA Trade Expo scheduled for September 5-7.

## New Malaloa/Fagatogo wharf set to be completed in two weeks

Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources director Ufagafa Ray Tulafono says that if everything goes as planned, the newly reconstructed wharf at the Malaloa/Fagatogo marina will be completed in about two weeks.

"We are very fortunate that this important project is nearing completion," Ufagafa said, adding that the completion of the project will provide better service for the people of American Samoa, especially the fishermen.

According to Ufagafa, costs associated with the project amount to an estimated \$500,000 which is being provided by the Department of Interior through the Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland, Oregon.

Ufagafa said funding was made possible under the Federal Systems Program.

Local residents who have seen the project as it progressed have expressed their delight with the work, saying that the new wharf is a complete makeover that was long overdue, and it has definitely enhanced the appearance of an area that was once very filthy and not up to standard.

The completion of the project could be considered a first step towards the fulfillment of Governor Togiola Tulafono's plan of developing the entire area from the Malaloa wharf to the former Burns Philp Building in Pago Pago which is currently the headquarters for the local branch of ASCO Motors.

Earlier this year, Togiola announced that there are interested investors looking very earnestly at the possibility of a complete private development of the area in question. However, he added, the government is also looking at developing the same area in case it doesn't work out with the investors and private financing.

Togiola said that development project "should really improve this side of the Bay Area," adding that across the bay, they are talking with the Army Corps of Engineers about extending the dock all way from Pago Park to accommodate the small boats that moor there.

The Governor said at the time, "There is a lot in the works and in the pipeline for the area. We are looking at redeveloping the whole Bay Area because this is our area of commerce, and it is only fitting because we are a seaport, that development should be directed there."

## **Governor's assistance sought in implementing program to keep American Samoa beautiful**

A resolution being sponsored by two members of the House of Representatives is requesting Governor Togiola Tulafono to direct the Department of Commerce to implement a "Keep American Samoa Clean" program.

(The resolution has been assigned to the House Government Operations Committee for review).

The measure states that the cleanliness of the territory has long been threatened by the ignorance, lack of education, and the people's indifference to the danger of refusing to take the initiative to keep their homes and surrounding areas clean.

That is why, according to the resolution, "Educating the public in schools, villages, and through the media will assist in illustrating the effects trash has on our environment, which in turn affects the attractiveness of the individual villages."

## **Two DPS officers complete training, now certified as motorcycle police instructors**

After completing a month-long training conducted by experts from Northwestern University in Ypsilanti, MI, Department of Public Safety officers Mosese Lomu and Utumoe Alefosio are now certified motorcycle police instructors.

Lomu and Alefosio not only successfully completed the course, but they placed among the top three out of nine motorcycle police officers from Florida, Wisconsin, Canada, and North Dakota who also participated in the training.

(Lomu finished in second while Alefosio placed third. There were 15 motorcycle police officers but only 9 of them, including Lomu and Alefosio, made it to the instructor course).

The accomplishments are nothing less than remarkable, considering the fact that this is the first time local DPS officers have attended an off-island motorcycle training course.

Acting Police Commissioner Filifaatali Mike Fuiava has expressed his delight, saying that DPS is very proud of the two officers, and their success contributes to better service for the people of American Samoa.

Both Lomu and Alefosio were required to complete a police motorcycle operator course, which is a prerequisite for the instructor course. The pair operates the two Honda models of DPS's motorcycle fleet which consists of six motorcycles, four of which are not on the road due to repairs.

Once the four motorcycles are back in operation, Lomu and Alefosio will be conducting training for other motorcycle officers from DPS.

## **Use of cell phones while driving could be banned if House bill gets approval**

The use of cellular telephones or other wireless communication or scheduling devices while driving could be banned if a bill introduced in the House of Representatives is approved.

Introduced by Representatives Mapu Puaopea Paopao and Tuialofi Faalae Tunupopo, the bill calls for a ban on the use of the aforementioned devices while driving on public highways, unless the device is specifically designed and configured to allow hands-free listening, talking, and operation, and it is used in that manner while driving.

According to the bill, wireless or cellular phones and other wireless communication or scheduling devices have become an everyday commodity in the territory. However, the use of such devices while driving a vehicle can become potentially dangerous because drivers become distracted and accidents are likely to occur as a result.

The proposed legislation grants an exception during emergency cases, and the ban excludes emergency services professionals, in the course and scope of their duties.

The bill will be reviewed by the House Public Safety/Homeland Security Committee.



## **Fiber optic cable project to get additional \$3 million from CIP funds**

The American Samoa Government's proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 includes \$3 million from the US Department of Interior's Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) funds that will fulfill ASG's share of \$9 million for the highly anticipated fiber optic cable which is expected to be up and running as early as March 2009.

(The first \$6 million of ASG's share came from the \$3 million under the DOI's CIP funds for FY08, and the \$3 million from the ASG's \$20-million-dollar loan from the government's Employees' Retirement Fund).

The \$3-million-dollar allocation for the fiber optic cable project is the largest allocation noted under the \$9.38 million in CIP funds included in the FY09 budget proposal.

The CIP budget it approved in advance by DOI and is included in its annual budget that is submitted to Congress.

Other CIP fund allocations include \$2.1 million for the Department of Education - \$750,000 each for Siliaga and Aua Elementary Schools; \$500,000 for elementary recreation; and \$150,000 for school buses.

In addition, ASPA is getting an allocation of \$1.6 million for water, sewer, and solid waste services. The Department of Port Administration has been allocated \$687,000 while set-aside funds are noted at \$469,000.

## **ASG/Port Administration gets \$164K for the Airport Fire Station Maintenance Program**

The American Samoa Government's Department of Port Administration has been awarded approximately \$164,000 from funds earmarked for economic, social, and political development of the territories.

This is according to a Notification of Grant Award from the Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs.

The award, which comes from the Airport Fire Station Maintenance Program, was granted on May 16, 2008 and received by ASG on July 23.

According to the award announcement, the performance goal is to hire a contractor to provide services related to the maintenance of the Airport Fire Station at the Pago Pago International Airport.

## **Tualauta II SPF SIG community coalition awarded \$625,000 grant**

Department of Human and Social Services Director Talia Faafetai I'aulualo has announced that the Office of National Drug Control Policy has awarded the SPF SIG Tualauta II Community Coalition a five-year Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant of \$625,000, making them the first of the local community coalitions to receive a grant of its own from the federal government.

The Tualauta II Coalition, also known as "Samoans Against Drugs and Alcohol," includes all Tafuna areas such as Fagaima, Ottoville, Fatuoaga, Petesa, Kokoland, Lipine, and Happy Valley.

The Tualauta II Coalition - led by president Rev. Eleasaro Fa'ata'a, vice president Pastor Henry Roberts, secretary Tanya Lesa, and treasurer Calvin Tagaloa - is one of a dozen community coalitions formed last March under the DHSS "Prevention FaaSamoa Project," also known as the SPF SIG.

The programs are formed by and for the territory's villages under supervision from the government, and the coalitions are comprised of community leaders, parents, the youth, teachers, religious and fraternal organizations, health care and business professionals, law enforcement, and the media.

SPF SIG is the \$6-million-dollar Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant awarded to DHSS last year to fund the creation substance abuse prevention programs. This marks the first time the task of prevention has been placed in the hands of the community, as opposed to the usual practice of leaving it to the government.

According to Talia, the five-year \$625,000 grant (\$125,000 annually) that Tualauta II has been awarded can be used beginning October 1, which is the beginning of the new fiscal year.

The grant is a portion of the \$24.4 million awarded to 199 communities across the US this year. Local grant monies for the DFC will be managed by the non-profit organization Tautua Samoa. Basically, the coalition will decide what the funds will be used for, while the third party, Tautua Samoa, will receive 10% for administrative costs.

## **American Samoa Smoke Free Environment Act introduced in the Fono**

Smoking could be banned in certain public places if a House bill introduced in the Fono gains approval from both chambers.

The American Samoa Smoke Free Environment Act aims to regulate “the habit and practice of smoking in certain public and private places.” The bill is being sponsored by Representatives Mary Lauagaia M. Taufete’e, Taotasi Archie Soliai, Atualevao Gafatasi Afalava, Vaito’a Hans Langkilde, and Fiasili Puni Haleck.

According to the measure, the owner of a public place including a restaurant, sports arena, or theater may designate a smoking area on the premises. In addition, smoking is strictly prohibited on buses, taxi cabs, public areas of retail stores, and lobbies of financial institutions.

The proposed bill not only includes penalties ranging from \$50-\$200 for those found to be in violation, but it also designates the Department of Health as the lead agency in implementing the act.

## **Senate approves bill that bans smoking on school grounds**

A bill aiming to prohibit smoking in and around school, college, and educational institution buildings was approved in its third reading in the Senate. The proposed legislation now heads to the House of Representatives for their review.

According to the bill, school officials must designate one “smoking area” per campus, for teachers and college instructors. The area shall be no less than 20 feet from a school building.

The measure makes reference to the 2006 US Surgeon General’s report which states that exposure to secondhand smoke causes diseases and premature death in children and adults who are not smokers.

## **Feleti Barstow Public Library offering free programs for children of all ages**

Parents looking for ways to keep their children occupied while having fun at the same time should check out the different programs currently being offered free of charge at the Feleti Barstow Public Library in Utulei, where there is always something exciting for everyone.

Beginning Monday, September 8, the library will be offering “Humpty Dumpty” for children 0-2 years old every Monday from 9:30am-10:00am. This will be followed by “Jacks and Jills” for the 3-4 year olds from 10:00am-11:00am.

From Monday-Thursday beginning September 2, children 6-13 years old can experience after-school adventures from 3:00pm-4:00pm with creative arts and story time, while older teens participate in programs of their own on the second floor in the conference room.

From 10:00am-12:00pm every Friday, the library will be conducting an outreach “Chicken Soup” program for the LBJ Medical Center’s Pediatric Ward.

And that’s not all. There’s even something to do on the weekend! On Saturday, from 11:00am-1:00pm, youngsters can enjoy a variety of different activities, books, and crafts.

All the programs are free and the materials are provided.

In addition to activities, the library is also offering a two-week introductory computer course which begins Monday, September 8 from 3:00pm-5:00pm for students in levels 6-8. Parents are encouraged to register their kids early, as there is a seating limit.

More information on the programs being offered at the Feleti Barstow Public Library can be obtained by calling 633-5816 or by visiting them in Utulei from 9:00am-5:00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; 9:00am-7:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and 10:00am-2:00pm on Saturdays.

## ***Governor Tulafono Attends US Coral Reef Task Force Meeting in Kona, Hawaii***

The Honorable Governor Togiola Tulafono took part in the week-long meeting of the 20<sup>th</sup> US Coral Reef Task Force in Kona, Hawaii from August 24-29. Joining the Governor were First Lady Maryann Tulafono, Director of Commerce Faleseu Eliu Paopao, Director of Marine and Wildlife Resources Ufagafa Ray Tulafono, and Department of Commerce Deputy Director Lelei Peau.

USCRTF members meet biannually to discuss key issues, propose new actions, present progress reports, and update the coral community on past accomplishments and future plans.

Several workshops were scheduled and provided greater opportunity for more in-depth discussion(s) on key issues related to coral reef management, including but not limited to watershed planning, climate change, and traditional ecological knowledge.

The official business meeting of the USCRTF occurred on August 27 and 29, and served to highlight conservation strategies, successes, and challenges in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific. This was an important meeting, as it was the final meeting of the USCRTF during the International Year of the Reef, and also coincided with the USCRTF's 10-year anniversary.

At this meeting, CEQ Director Jim Connaughton announced President Bush's recent memo to conduct Pacific wide assessments of potential marine monuments that heighten protection of special ecological, biological, and scientific areas such as the Rose Atoll.

Earlier this year in April, Governor Tulafono requested through a letter to President Bush to designate the Rose Atoll as a National Marine Monument, which would allow further protection up to 12 nautical miles as well as enhanced resources to conserve this special area.

At the meeting, Samoa was represented by Toni Tiapama'a from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment who led a delegation to American Samoa in April for the first round of working level meetings to share and work on joint environmental projects. The presentation at the USCRTF meeting received acclaim and support of the membership as a model to forge international relationships as a Pacific network for resource protection. This initiative is a recently established collaboration between American Samoa and the Independent State of Samoa to jointly research, manage, and conserve coral reef resources in both jurisdictions.

The Two Samoa's Initiative is a response to the inter-connectedness of the Samoan Archipelago and the variety of shared species and resources within the Pacific Ocean.

The United States Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) meeting highlighted several key matters which included a "New Roadmap" and "Framework for Action." Both are intended to improve coral reef management and provide more effective action to combat climate change, and emerging challenges within protection of ocean and coastal resources.

The USCRTF was established in 1998 by Presidential Executive Order 13089 to lead U.S. efforts to preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. The USCRTF has been instrumental in building partnerships and strategies for on-the-ground action to conserve coral reefs and works in cooperation with state, territorial, commonwealth, and local government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, the scientific community, and commercial interests to further the understanding and conservation of coral reef ecosystems.

The USCRTF is responsible for developing and implementing coordinated efforts to map and monitor U.S. coral reefs; research the causes of, and solutions to coral reef decline; reduce and mitigate coral reef degradation from pollution, over fishing and other causes; and implement strategies to promote conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs internationally.

In 2000, the USCRTF adopted the *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs (National Action Plan)*, the first national blueprint for U.S. domestic and international action to address the growing coral reef crisis. The plan outlines 13 integrated conservation strategies within two fundamental themes to address the most pressing challenges facing reefs today. To help implement the *National Action Plan*, the USCRTF launched a variety of initiatives and provides a forum to support collaborative action of its members and partner organizations.



## ASCC/ITT Instructors Earning Professional Certifications

*By James Kneubuhl, ASCC Press Officer*

“I would describe certification or professional licensure as the future trend for trades and technology,” says Leusoga “Bill” Emmsley, Dean of the Institute of Trades & Technology (ITT) at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC). “Within any industry involving technology, you notice a preference given to individuals who’ve gone through the process of earning their certification or professional license. which are technical performance-based credentials. ITT plans to follow this trend by requiring that all of our instructors will need this level of qualification to teach within their respective fields.”

As part of the professional development plan (PDP) outlined by Leusoga, four ITT instructors recently earned fresh certification or re-certification in their respective content areas. Michael Lea’u, Communication Information Technology (ICT) Instructor, attended the Cisco Regional Academy at the Honolulu Community College to earn the certification issued by Cisco Computer Repair and Cisco Networking Systems.

Etemani Elisara, instructor in Architectural, Drafting and AutoCAD, became certified in Autodesk for AutoCAD 2009 and Revit Structure, Revit Mechanical, Electrical and Piping by USACAD in Honolulu. Fred Suisala, Automotive, Diesel and Air Condition & Refrigeration (AC&R) instructor, stayed here in American Samoa, but still got his re-certification issued by ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) as a Master Certified Technician, indicating an expertise in all eight areas of automotive and diesel servicing. ITT chairperson Sal Poloai gained his certification for Apprentice Coordinator from the US Department of Labor Bureau of Apprenticeship Training Center in Honolulu.

“This means that students who attend classes in these areas will have the benefit of learning from individuals who have sufficient mastery the content area to fulfill the requirements of professional certification,” explained Leusoga. “If you intend on becoming a professional in any of these fields, you can study under some who’s already made the grade in your area. What better qualifications could you ask for?”

Asked about the difference between certification and professional licensure, Leusoga explained, “In some fields, certification usually takes place on a national level. In other fields, each state issues its own licenses based on the local needs, standards and specifications as determined by the state and local governments and unions. In other words, when a tradesman such as a carpenter from Oregon wants to work in California, he might have to get a California professional license to work there. In other fields like computers, you can earn certification recognized anywhere in the nation. The whole system can be complex, but it still boils down to recognized qualifications as a professional.”

Currently, ITT is an authorized test center for ASE, Autodesk, Cisco, CompITT A+, which are all nationally recognized certifications. In addition, with the inclusion of the Apprenticeship Training Program, its certification will be issued by the United States Department of Labor, and ITT plans to procure certification for all of its trades and technology programs.

“With these instructors certified in their content areas, the level of expertise they are now able to convey to students is current, relevant and credible,” said Leusoga. “Thus, the quality of education and training corresponding increases and the confidence of students will likewise intensify.” Leusoga added that the ITT plans to have all of its faculty and staff either certified or in possession of a professional license by the end of summer 2009. For more information on the many opportunities offered by the ITT programs, email ITT at [itt@amsamoa.edu](mailto:itt@amsamoa.edu) or visit the ASCC website ([www.amsamoa.edu](http://www.amsamoa.edu)) and click on Trades & Technology.



*Staff members of the ASCC Institute of Trades & Technology who have recently completed upgraded or new certifications in their respective fields include (l-r) Fred Suisala, Sal Poloai, Michael Lea'u and Etemani Elisara.  
(Photo: ITT)*